

## The Lord is My Rock – by Lorelei Pepe

When I was in my early twenties working in the fashion business in New York City, I got the opportunity to take a fashion design position in Santa Cruz, California. They needed a knit fabric designer and apparel designer for their young men and ladies' top lines. Having a degree from the Fashion Institute of Technology with a background in textile and apparel design it was determined it would be a good "fit".

I loved California, as I have been out on previous trips and this job was located about 70 miles south of San Francisco, so I was thrilled. I had quite a huge responsibility heading up the department, hiring patternmakers, sewers, etc. Being young, I was a bit naïve as I thought I would be accepted there easily but that was not the case. Some of the young girls were jealous of me and suspicious of me too.

We all worked in a huge warehouse, and it was a very casual atmosphere. I had to learn to "dress down" coming from the big city. I wanted to fit in too. I dressed when I traveled to the next town to the factory to see my samples produced and make corrections, which I enjoyed.

The man that hired me, also from New York, took off for trips to India and China not long after he hired me, so I felt quite alone. He said he was looking for connections but did not bother to tell me he was bringing along his wife and "designer" daughter along. The man he left in his place was clueless to the business, so I had to fill him in.

The first few months, I spent long hours working and felt pretty alone when I would return to my hotel room at night, my temporary home until I could get an apartment. I did revel in the fact that I was only 10 minutes from work and the ocean and could spend lunch hours by the sea watching the surfers and the seals.

One day, when I left to go to a meeting in another warehouse, I left my purse on the floor of my desk filled with everything I owned including my car keys. When I returned a few hours later, much to my horror it was gone. I looked everywhere, trying not to panic. I was devastated. At 5 o'clock everyone disappeared without a word to me and I was pretty much stranded. But one of the stock boys who was doing inventory helped me out. He knew my situation and that I did not have anyway to get back to the hotel, so he took me to the car rental place to get another set of keys. I was in a terrible state and was holding back the tears. He even lent me money to get food to bring to the hotel that night.

The next day, after questioning everyone about my missing bag, one guy ran outside and looked in the dumpster and found it! I was thrilled to see my credit cards were there, with the car keys, but all my cash was gone. I was relieved but still upset. It took a long time to feel comfortable again there, but thank God there were no other incidents.

That evening after work, I took a drive down to the sea again and watched the waves come crashing to the shore. It relaxed me and I breathed in the beautiful sea air. I parked next to a bunch of huge rocks and decided to climb them and sit and meditate. I was happy for the sparkling blue sky and the sun was still very bright and I felt it on me. A few moments of peace. Then I started to pray, just talking to God and giving him my fears and doubts. I could start to relax and feel the Lord's presence. Bible verses came to my mind too. I thought of the Psalms that had helped me so many times before through the rough times. I recalled Psalm 42:11 "Why are you cast down? Oh, my soul and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God".... And then I knew Jesus was with me. I was on the rock, and he was my rock and my salvation. It was comforting to know that even though I was in new surroundings I was not alone. No

matter where I went, Jesus would be there. All I had to do was think of him and call out to him. He gave me renewed strength and hope for the future.

So, remember in the midst of all your toils and troubles in life, you are never alone... Jesus is there.

Psalm 31:3 "For you are my Rock and my fortress.... Lead me and guide me... for you are my strength."